21: Thomas F6 (no date) 1982 MM2 Hadhramaut MM2

a woman's hand as we should in a hand shake is a shameful overture. The stranger meeting a woman would salute her with outstretched hand and a smart tap of the finger tips only.

Generally speaking, the woman in South Arabia has more liberty than in any other part I know. If there are no love matches in our sense of the word, ladies do make *qasidas* which are passed on for those for whom they are intended by word of mouth. Elsewhere no woman would dare sing—it would be unthinkable for instance in Oman, where she would be beaten as a hussy, but I often heard in these mountains the choruses of women at the water-holes, and very charming they sounded.

Marriage in South Arabia requires a *gadhi*, but divorce does not. A man has only to tire of his wife and say *Talag* three times, whereupon she must betake herself to her father's house with no alimony beyond the original marriage price—wherefore she is a careful woman. If she is tired of him she must return his marriage portion, and her family the purchase price. It is a rule amongst them that a woman who has gone blind is never divorced. A really expensive bride may cost 20 cows, say 400 Maria Theresa dollars, but they can be much cheaper, ranging downwards to one cow or even 10 dollars. The groom and bride representative father or brother) descend to the plain where a *gadhi* legalizes the marriage, and on returning, the women folk of the bride, preceded by men, conduct her to the cave of her spouse. The only cave furniture will be a small carpet bought for the occasion. The bridegroom will slaughter a couple of cows to make a feast and invite all to it, but beyond the men's *rabot* (a monotonous chant of the mountains) there is no dancing and joy-making such as characterize rites of circumcision.

With these tribes child-birth seems to be easy for the woman. She works up to a day or two before the child arrives. She bears it under a tree in the open or in a cave with the possible assistance of her mother or sister, the position being said to be not unlike that taken up by a sprinter for the start of a race. They have no beds, there is no lying in and she is generally fit for work the next day.

Illegitimacy is almost unknown in spite of the greater freedom enjoyed. Early and universal marriage is the reason. Transgression for a girl is regarded differently here than elsewhere in Arabia. In Oman an unmarried expectant mother, or a wife committing adultery, would on discovery be murdered by her father or brother—not by her husband. Nothing would be done to the man who had seduced her. Here the girl would be turned out of the tribe and have to fend for herself, and her male relations would wreak revenge on some female relation of the seducer if they could not pursue and wound him with a sword.

CAVES AND HOUSES.

In the mountains men live in caves during the summer monsoon rain, and under trees at other times. They are not nomads and caves are private possessions. In the coastal plain itself, where man makes a house to shelter himself, the first thing he does is to hammer four nails into the respective corners of the house, which are supposed to keep out the Evil Eye. When completed he slaughters a lamb on the threshold as a sacrifice to his walls enduring—